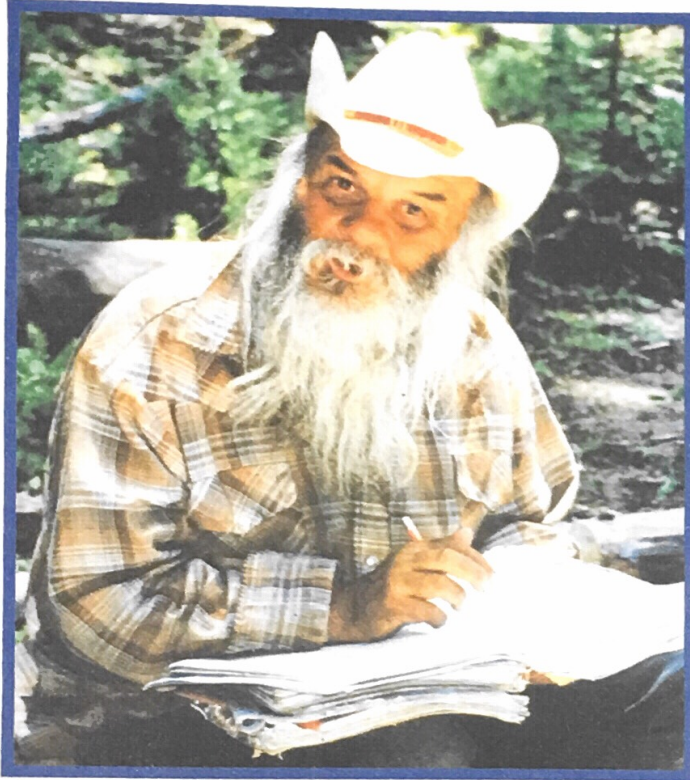


Rainbow Family Life Stories



*by Jodey Bateman.
Interviews with Rainbow
Family of Living Light
folks conducted between
1977 and 2008.*

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09.G BRYAN - "I Seen It All"

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[09.G]

Bryan - I Seen It All

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"Bryan's an STP New Rider, but he's a good guy," Crazy John says. A new rider, is one who became part of STP after the "originals." Bryan started running with STP as the campus radical-freak communities that STP hung out in were dying down. He is frustrated because much of the life he wanted to be a part of disappeared while he was still young. I

"Well I'm standin' on the corner in Winslow, Arizona
And such a fine sight to see.

There's a girl, my Lord, in a flat-bed Ford
Shovin' down to take a look at me...

... We may lose and we may win, but we'll never be here again
So open up, I'm climbin' in, and take it easy."

Do you know why I like to play that song on the juke box? Cause it's about me. That's my life. You ask if I done this or that. I seen it all, man.

I was born in December, 1955, in Alvin, Texas. I think that everybody's plastic there. Everybody's phony as shit. All the long hairs there are into money and having big cars and fancy apartments. There's a lot of money to be made there doing construction work. It's growing real fast, becoming part of Houston.

As soon as I heard of the hippie movement when I was in grade school, I told everybody I was going to be a hippie when I grew up. I started getting stoned when I was in the sixth grade, smoking pot, doing valiums, whatever was in the medicine chest. My old man's always got pheno-barbitols and dilantin.

My father is an exterminator. He kills bugs. My mother died when I was 14. I left home on my 15th birthday. I went to the big city of Houston. I lived with my sister - and also in the bushes behind signs after she kicked me out. And sometimes before she kicked me out. I used to get so stoned, I'd pass out before I

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could get home. I used to do a lot of downers back when they didn't cost so much.

I wasn't gone too long until my old man came and got me and beat the fuck out of me and brought me back home. I didn't stay there very long. I took a bus to California - LA, Skid Row. I was scared of the wins. It was the first night I had ever hung out on the streets. The first night, all my money was gone. I stayed in a hotel for \$6 a night.

I met this guy in Pershing Square. He said, "Let's go parkhandle."

I said, "What the hell's that?"

He said, "Let's go bum money."

That night I stayed in a mission sitting up in a chair all night. There was wins in the mission puking and coughing all night.

After that I stuck my thumb out on the San Bernardino Freeway. I went to Fort Meyers Beach, Florida, with another hitch hiker. Then I went to Coconut Grove. It was all right then. I liked it better then than I do now. It's changed just like every place has changed. There's not as many freaks as there used to. People won't pick you up hitch hiking like they used to. There ain't as many drugs around. People are more into working than hanging out.

I was doing the same thing I'm doing now. I dropped acid, smoked pot, fucked chicks. Definitely it was more fun back then. There was more free meals back then, too. I got into STP in '72, something like that. It's not like getting involved. It's just hanging around, drinking with people, stuff like that. I'd been on the road a couple of years since I was 15. I guess I'm a little smarter now than I was then - a lot.

I've been to a couple of smoke-ins in Washington DC the Yippie movement had for the Fourth of July on the Washington Monument Grounds. The Yippie movement would fucking bring pounds in. The cops were walking around real friendly. You was smoking pot and the cops standing next to you.

I was on my way to the Rainbow Gathering they had in southern Utah in 1974, but I was too busy getting stoned. I never made it. I remember the Fiddler's Convention at Union Grove, North Carolina, Easter 1976 - 200,000 people there. Everybody was hanging out at the Rainbow Family school bus - like Itchy Ritchie, Greek Mary, Stray Dog. There was this 50-year-old chick called Mama hanging out with Jimmer from the Rainbow Family in a VW van traveling along with the bus. Jimmer and Mama cooked stew in a big old cauldron and if you didn't have nothing, they'd give you some. But some people give us chili and Tacos that was left over. I was eating so much, I was getting sick and throwing up.

I don't even drink like I used to, but I still drink every day. When I don't drink, I've had real strong DT's. I've had alcoholic seizures. I've heard voices, I've heard music. It seems real, man. I see people walking up to me out of the corner of my eye. It's like doing belladonna. I ain't had no pussy in five months. It's being such an alcoholic. I fuck that bottle.

I wore a long john top until it was black. It was so funky, it was falling apart and I had to sew it together. Finally I threw it away in a dumpster in Miami. I'm a lot cleaner. I'm probably the grubbier person I know on my job because I wear an old wind coat. I've been working in Austin for a couple of weeks. I've been picketing a grocery store that's not union - professionally for \$2.65 an hour. The union pays me to do it.

Never in my life have I paid rent. I wouldn't know what it would be like. I've always had a place to stay or sleep in the bushes. Now I'd like my own place to sleep.

[Since this interview in December, 1977, I have seen Bryan at the Austin Rainbow House, the Fourth Street Park in Tucson and other street people hangouts. His face showed the ravages of alcohol. But when I met up with Bryan in Austin in 1989, he had been living with a woman for four years and

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they had a year-old daughter. He looked much healthier. He said he drank much less.]

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